

Keys
to Standing
Strong In Christ



*Our
Identity*



KEYS TO STANDING STRONG IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Our subject is Standing Strong in the Lord. In Christ we stand strong. In our own strength we continuously fall. ***"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."***

Who am I?

The real you is a spirit that lives in a body that has a soul.

Do I Have An Identity Problem?

My prayer is that, in our time together in the Word, the Lord will encourage, strengthen and empower us to live His Life **FROM His LOVE, FORGIVENESS AND ACCEPTANCE** rather than **FOR His LOVE, FORGIVENESS AND ACCEPTANCE**.

When our old man died on the cross with Christ, there were certain things to which we died. Our spirit ceased its relationship with certain things. These things no longer hold power over us -- over our spirit, our true identity. We are dead to them. Galatians 2:20 says,

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

The real you has been co-crucified with Christ. When He died, you died. When He was buried, you were buried. When He resurrected, you resurrected. The first thing that you died to was SIN, not SINS, which are the acts of unrighteousness, but sin, which is the power that produces those acts of unrighteousness. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:1-2)

- **How many of you truly believe the Bible?**
- **How many of you truly believe what I have read?**
- **To stand strong in the Lord, we need to have a spiritual awareness of identifying in Christ's death, burial and resurrection.**

GRACE MARTIAL ARTS EXAMPLES OF 3-ZONE DEFENSE

COMMAND - CONTROL & PASSIVE POSITIONS

IMPUTATION: GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS CREDITED TO ONE'S ACCOUNT

"RIGHTEOUSNESS IS A GIFT FROM GOD."

Since man "**COMES SHORT**" and cannot make himself righteous, righteousness will have to be given to him from God. This is exactly what Romans 5:17 says.

This God-given *righteousness* is available to man "**BY THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST,**" according to Romans 3:22. The righteousness of God is available to mankind because of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. God is not giving out *His righteousness* as a reward to us because of our faithful service to Him. God is giving out *His righteousness* as a gift to us because of Christ's faithful service to God the Father. Ephesians 3:12 **Teaches that our access to God is because of Christ's faithfulness.** Philippians 3:9 **says that it is not my righteousness, but Christ's righteousness, and my faith in Him that saves me.**

The word "*impute*" means "*to credit to one's account.*" For instance, suppose my bank account is short the necessary funds required for paying my debts. A person who loves me can deposit the amount necessary into my bank account, which will keep me out of jail. Since Jesus Christ paid for all my sins, and since it is *His righteousness* that God sees applied to my account the moment I believe in Christ, I am secure. **His righteousness** never fails!

Does imputed righteousness mean that God makes me righteous?

"THEREFORE WE CONCLUDE THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH WITHOUT THE DEEDS OF THE LAW." (Romans 3:28)

We understand from the meaning of the word "*impute*" that God takes *His righteousness* and puts it to the account of all who believe in Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:33 says that we are *Justified* by God. - **He is the Source.**

Romans 5:9 says that we are *Justified* by His Blood. - **Christ's blood is the Basis.**

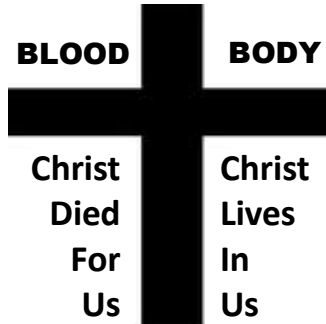
Romans 3:24 says that we are *Justified* by Grace. - **Grace is the Means.**

Romans 5:1 says that we are *Justified* by Faith. - **Here is the Appropriation.**

Romans 4:25 says that we are *Justified* by the Resurrection of Christ. - **This is the Guarantee.**

THE TWO SIDES OF THE CROSS

There are two sides of the cross. On the blood side, Jesus Christ died for our sins. Through His death we obtained forgiveness of sins.



On the body side of the cross, in the unseen eternal realm, in our spirit, we experienced with Christ what He experienced. We died with Him and were raised with Him.

WE HAVE ONLY 3 OPTIONS FOR OUR FAITH AND TRUST.

(1) MAN'S RELIGIONS (2) OUR FINITE MINDS (3) THE WORD OF GOD

When Christ died on the cross, we died with Him. Our old unregenerate spirit man is dead and buried. We are dead to sin! We are dead to the law. That is a foundational truth in the Christian life. In Romans 6:4-6 & 11, the Apostle Paul emphasized both our crucifixion with Christ and our resurrection with Him:

"Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: KNOWING this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Likewise RECKON ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Neither YIELD ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (K.R.Y. = KNOW - RECKON - YIELD)

We do not "feel" dead. We do not "look" dead. We often do not "act" dead; But, at some point, the Holy Spirit pulls back the curtain and shows us, in the deepest part of our spirit, our true identity.

THE REAL YOU IS A SPIRIT THAT LIVES IN A BODY THAT HAS A SOUL.

A DEATH HAS OCCURRED THAT HAS FOREVER CHANGED US.

CHRIST DIED FOR US † WE DIED WITH HIM

This aspect of the cross, that we died with Him, can be called the Double-cross. There are two sides of the cross. The first side is the "BLOOD SIDE." That is where Christ died for us. He shed his blood for the forgiveness of our sins. The second side is the "BODY SIDE." We were united with Him on the cross, participating in His death, burial and resurrection. Our old man was crucified with Him. Our new man, righteous and holy, was resurrected with Him.

In the unseen and eternal realm, an exchange has taken place in our spirit that, once we know it, produces through us a quality of life that is different from anything else the world has seen. It is light in darkness. It is loving others unconditionally in a world of self-love. It is Christ in us, the Hope of glory, living His life through us.

Christians are called upon to be faithful, to be consistent, to be stable, to be strong, to be bold, to be courageous, to be unwavering and to be uncompromising as the children of God. God's Word seldom asked to *DO* but, rather, simply to *BE*! God calls us to *BE* stable, firm and strong. The attacks of the world, the flesh and the devil are continually coming against us. Persecution, hostility, rejection, tastings, trials and temptations of all kinds from within and from without come at us to take us out -- to make us unstable.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Ephesians 6:10 & 11)

HOW DO WE DO THAT?

Obviously, all of us who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ would affirm that we want to stand strong in the Lord and be spiritually stable. No one likes being defeated. No one likes thinking that he/she is a loser. No one likes being beaten down. No one likes being depressed. No one likes falling under temptation and into sin-addictions. No one likes persecution. No one really enjoys going through a test and failing it. We want to be winners. We want to triumph over temptations. We want to be victors.

We look at someone such as the Apostle Paul and wonder if he's even human, because he seems to experience so much spiritual victory in the midst of so much spiritual warfare.

The questions that I have are: "How can I be consistently strong in the Lord and maintain spiritual stability? How can any of us hold our ground? How can we not be defeated and become triumphant? How can we not be depressed and be joyous? How can we rise above the physical, emotional and spiritual turmoil of our lives that comes against us?"

PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9

1. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast/*strong* in the Lord, my dearly beloved.
2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.
3. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.
4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.
5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
6. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
9. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

GRACE MARTIAL ARTS EXAMPLES OF A STRONG STANCE TO ESCAPE

Mugged By Sin-Addictions † Choked Out By Besetting Sins

STAND FIRM IN THE LORD

Stand against doubt. Stand against temptations. Stand against trials and tests. Stand against persecution. Paul's instructions to us give us principles that we can employ to stand firm:

1. Spiritual stability requires cultivating peace in the fellowship. We looked at verse one and saw Paul's expression of love. When we looked at verses two and three, we saw how deeply Paul desired the unity of the Church. He wanted those two opposing women, Euodias and Syntyche, to get together. Individual spiritual strength and stability is the result of corporate church harmony and peace. When there is peace and harmony in the Church, the Body is accountable to being strong and stable. On the other hand, where there is discord and conflict in the Church, insecurity is the result. So, the first virtue that is necessary for standing strong in the Lord is peace within ourselves and within the corporate Body of Christ.
2. The second prerequisite to standing strong in the Lord is found in verse four. Not only does spiritual stability mandate the cultivation of peace in the fellowship, but also maintenance of a spirit of joy. Knowing who we are IN the Lord Jesus Christ will give us joy unspeakable! "Rejoice in the Lord always," Paul says, "and I will say again rejoice." The key to real peace and joy is focusing on who we are IN Christ, NOT focusing on our problems.

"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unprovable in his sight." (Colossians 1:20-22)

When we attach our rejoicing to our identity in Christ, we remain emotionally stable because as He is, so are we. He never changes, nor does His relationship to you and me ever change. So, we learn to rejoice in the privileged union we have in and with Christ Jesus the Lord. What God's Word says about our identity in Christ transcends every difficult life situation and circumstance.

GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN

3. The third prerequisite for standing strong in the Lord is learning to accept less than we deserve. Verse 5 says, ***"Let your fore bearing be known to all men."*** What the Apostle Paul means by that word *"forebearing"* is the virtue of humility. You can call it *"forbearing,"* or call it *contentment,* or call it *"humble graciousness."* It is the attitude of a person who sincerely seeks the interests of others above his/her interests.
- **PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO PRINCIPLE:** ***"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."***
 - It is all about being set free from the entitlement mentality! When we get nothing, we are not concerned. That is "Humility," A very desirable character quality for a cohesive marital relationship or any healthy relationship.
4. The fourth character asset for maintaining spiritual stability is found in verses 5 and 6. Scripture says that ***"the Lord is near, so be anxious for nothing."*** What are we going to worry about when the Lord is there? If we believe God's Word and we believe He is in us and we are in Him, then what are we to worry about? He transcends every problem. Only by accepting by faith our true identity in Christ can we experience His Life being lived in us as us. At the deepest level of your personhood, you are NOT A SINNER. YOU ARE A SAINT!

Grace Martial Arts Examples of Christ-Centered Humility

† Being Pushed -- Bullied by Life-Destroying Problems

... Pull them to you with love. Send them away with forgiveness.

† Being Pulled -- Bullied by Life-Destroying Problems

... Evade and redirect negative energy

"Gentle Words turn away wrath." "Before Honor is Humility."

ACCEPTING YOUR ACCEPTANCE

You are God's holy, righteous, blameless child. You have His nature. Your deepest being always wants to do your Father's will, just as the Lord Jesus Christ wanted to do His Father's will (Romans 7:22 and John 4:34). ***"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." "Jesus saith unto them, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.'"***

This is who you are according to the Word of God! Just because you experience thoughts, feelings and, even, behavior to the contrary, does not change that fact! Only by accepting your acceptance by faith can you begin to experience its reality. ***"To the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved."*** (Ephesians 1:6)

As we grow in a deeper understanding of our identity and our acceptance in the beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we begin to develop His thoughts about our difficult life-challenges. Through every difficult situation God has been conforming us more and more to be strong in Him. The Lord God is in the every situation. He will take us through the situation and He is beautiful for every situation. Most importantly, the situation will find you out **for good** or **for bad** depending on how you respond to the difficult life-challenging situation. In the middle of our trial we can choose to be thankful because the purpose of God is being worked out by that trial. We can choose to be thankful for God's provision of care, mercy and comfort in the process of our trials.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves Are comforted of God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

The Lord always helps us through trials -- comforting, encouraging and supporting us so that we are equipped to help, comfort, encourage and support others.

GODLY THINKING VS. PSYCHO-BABBLE

5. The fifth virtue/character quality that equips us to stand strong in the Lord and maintain spiritual stability is the ability to focus on Godly virtues: in Phillipians 4: 8.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are TRUE, whatsoever things are HONEST, whatsoever things are JUST, whatsoever things are PURE, whatsoever things are LOVELY, whatsoever things are of GOOD REPORT; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

In order to be spiritually stable and to experience joy, peace, humility, faith and gratitude, we need to focus on Godly virtues. This is another great key to living the victorious Christ-centered life. This is one of my favorite Bible verses. What the Apostle is saying is summed up in that last phrase, "**Think on these things.**" Standing strong and maintaining spiritual stability is a result of how we think and reason! This is a key to experiencing the Spirit-filled life!

PSYCHO-BABLE & NAVAL GAZING = ANALYSIS PARALYSIS

Modern psychology today says that, if you want to be stable, if you want to be delivered from your schizophrenia -- from your various neuroses and psychoses -- you need to dredge up the scum of the past. You need to find your old sins, your old hurts, the abuses and mistreatments and all your life failures. Then, you need to poke around, stir it up, regurgitate it all, etc., etc. However, in the light of verse 8, this opinion seems to be utterly obtuse and ridiculous. What God's Word says clearly is this: We are to focus our attention and our minds completely on things that are **TRUE, HONORABLE, RIGHT, PURE, LOVELY** and of **GOOD REPUTE**. The focus of the Christian is away from shame-based thinking.

(Phillipians 3:13 & 14)

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

AS A MAN THINKS IN HIS HEART, SO IS HE

Philippians 4:8, says, ***"Let your mind think on these things."*** It means not just to think in the simple one-dimensional sense. It means to evaluate, to consider the validity and implications of these things. We are challenged to develop these kinds of thinking habits.

We, as believers, are a product of our thinking. ***"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."*** (Proverbs 23:7) Whatever you program into your mind is exactly what you are going to get out. In computer lingo it is **"GIGO" = "Garbage In, Garbage Out."**

The mind is the command center which determines our conduct based upon how we think and how we have been influenced to think. So, how one thinks is the critical issue. You are going to react according to how you think. The mind, then, has the power to shape you and to shape your actions.

"The battle over sin is won or lost at the threshold of the mind."

- God has commanded us to think. Isaiah 1:18 says, ***"Come now, let us reason together."*** Let's think this thing through. He didn't say, "Come let us feel one another's feelings." He didn't say, "Come let us experience this together." He said, ***"Come, let's reason this through together."***
- ***Galatians 5:16*** says, ***"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."*** This key verse clearly defines how day-by-day to walk triumphantly over the flesh. We were given spiritual birth through believing the Gospel of Christ. He began His good work in us. Christ, also empowers us by His Spirit to walk victoriously over sin that is in our flesh.
- ***Galatians 3:3*** questions, ***"Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"***

GRACE MARTIAL ARTS EXAMPLES - HOW TO HANDLE MULTIPUL ATTACKERS

(Psalms 144:1)

"Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teaches my hands to war, and my fingers to fight."

THE UNREGENERATED MIND

WHAT THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT OUR THINKING BEFORE WE ARE SAVED?

First of all, our minds are depraved. (*Romans 1:28*). ***“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; a mind void of judgment.”*** It is depraved, debased, debauched, wicked, evil and evil. That's what that means.

Secondly, our minds are blind (*2 Corinthians 4:4*). ***“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”***

Thirdly, our minds are vain. (*Ephesians 4:17*) ***“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.”***

Fourthly, our minds are ignorant. *Ephesians 4:18* speaks of ***“having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”***

Finally, our minds are foolish. *1 Corinthians 2:14* says, ***“But the natural man received not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”***

Faith comes by hearing words spoken about Christ. It is not by some esoteric means. Faith comes through the mind of reason. ***“Come now, let us reason together, says Isaiah, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool, though they be red like crimson they shall become as white as snow.”*** The Gospel of Christ, through the working of the Holy Spirit, regenerates and renews our minds' thinking.

Grace Martial Arts Examples of Christ-Centered Thinking

Physical Skill Repetition = Heightened Skill Ability

Faith in Christ Repetition = Heightened Godly Character

THE REGENERATED MIND

Now, what about the mind at salvation? It demands reason and it demands understanding. An element of salvation is occurring within the mind as a person is coming to comprehend the truth about himself, the truth about his sin, the truth about God, the truth about the work of Christ and the truth about the future. That all comes into the mind. The Spirit of God has invaded our spirit and our mental thought processes. We do not think only as a human brain anymore? We think as a human brain mingled with the Spirit of the Living God, Who lives within us and we within Him. We now have access to, whole new, Christ-centered regenerated thought patterns.

One of the reasons God saves mankind is for them to become worshipers of Him. ***Revelation 4:11 says, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."***

The Father seeks true worshipers. A true worshiper worships in Spirit and in truth. So, if we are saved to worship in truth, then truth is crucial. Salvation is God's work on the mind. It is unacceptable to worship God apart from the truth (John 4:23 & 24).

Romans 8:5 a mentions ***"those who are according to flesh."*** Unregenerate people, non-Christian people those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. Unsaved people have an unsaved fleshly mindset. They think about fleshly things. Romans 8:5-b says, ***"Those who are according to the Spirit, those who are regenerated, set their mind on the things of the Spirit."*** We have a new mind. Romans 8:6, ***"For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace."***

The Spirit of God moves into our thinking. And now, that mind which was once depraved, blind, futile, ignorant and foolish is totally different. We have the ability to exchange our contaminated thinking for Godly thinking. It is incredible! All of a sudden, our thought patterns which are physical and human are injected with thought patterns which are divine and supernatural. **WOW!**

**“FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN US BOTH
TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE”**

(Philippians 2:13)

We need to remind ourselves that we have been saved FROM the penalty of sin by what Christ has done FOR us. We will be kept FROM the power of sin by what Christ is

PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

When we recognize ***“IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN US BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE,”*** suddenly the shoulds and ought's and musts of Satan’s frantic life become the **“Be still. And be” of God’s Life.** ***“The Be Still and Be”*** of His Eternal Presence. Jesus is living His life in us uniquely as us! He has joined His Spirit with our Spirit. We are containers of His Deity. Let us remember to Practice His Presence...

“But thanks be to God, which givethus the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

(1 Corinthians 15:57-58)

Personal Notes

1 Corinthians 16:13

**“Be on your Guard;
Stand Firm in the
Faith; Be Men of
Courage; Be
Strong.”**

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PART THREE OF FOUR